

## **HOLY THURSDAY**

### **A Last Supper/Seder Re-enactment (All Grades)**

*Set the table. Each participant should have a cup and a plate on which you have placed a green vegetable (parsley or celery), a bitter herb (radish or horseradish), and a small amount of salt.*

*In the center of the table place candles, one large cup, a large matzah, and a bowl of "horoses" (a mixture of sliced apples, chopped nuts, and cinnamon).*

*Place a bowl of water, a cloth, grape juice and a plate of matzah near the leader's place.*

### **Last Supper/Seder Celebration**

**Leader:** Today we remember that Jesus and his friends celebrated a Jewish Passover, a Seder, a solemn meal carried out according to ancient Jewish ritual. Let us pretend we are in the upper room of a house. We are celebrating the Passover of God's people from slavery to freedom.

We, (name of class or school), light candles to remind ourselves that Jesus, the light of the world, is coming.

**Reader 1:** (Lights the candles and says:) Blessed are you, God, for you have made us alive and keep us alive through all seasons. During this spring season may our home be filled with peace and joy.

**Reader 2:** Food is always blessed before it is eaten. A long time ago, the Jews blessed their bread and wine at their Jewish Passover. Just as they did, we bless ours tonight (today). The presider at the Lord's Supper also blessed the food at the offertory.

**All:** Thank you, God, for choosing us to be your people. We celebrate all you have given us.

### **The Elijah Cup**

**Reader 1:** There is an extra cup on this table. We would give this cup of honor to any stranger who should come and ask to keep the Passover with us. We call this cup the Elijah cup because Elijah is known to have helped the poor. We open the door to welcome anyone who may stand outside. We pray for the hungry and the poor and wish they could celebrate this meal with us.

## **Pouring and Drinking the Wine**

**Leader:** Four times during the Seder meal, wine is passed. We will pass the wine only twice. Usually the wine is poured from one bowl to show oneness. (*The leader pours grape juice into each person's cup.*)

At the Last Supper, Christ poured wine for his friends and said, "Take this and drink it. I tell you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine again until I drink it with you in my father's Kingdom."

**All:** Blessed are you, God, for making this fruit of the vine. (*The participants drink their juice.*)

## **Washing of Hands**

**Leader:** We must clean not only our hands but also our hearts and minds. The presider washes his hands just as Christ washed the feet of his friends at the Last Supper. This gesture shows how much he loves us; it calls us to serve others. (*The leader washes his or her hands and then washes the hands of all the participants as a sign of willingness to serve.*)

**All:** Thank you, God, for showing us how to serve others.

## **Eating of Greens**

**Leader:** We eat these greens as a symbol that nature comes to life in spring-time. Following the Jewish custom, we dip the greens in salt and pray:

**All:** Blessed are you, God, creator of the fruit of the earth. (*Participants dip the greens in salt and eat them.*)

## **Questions**

**Leader:** Now we will retell the story of the first Passover. God told us to do this in the book of Exodus. The first part of our Sunday Badarak and of our meal today instruct us. The youngest person present asks the traditional questions.

**Reader 2:** Why is this night different from all other nights? Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs? Why do we hold this meal on this night?

## **Meaning of the Food**

**Leader:** To show that the food for this celebration is a symbol of God helping the people escape from Egypt, we will explain its meaning.

**All:** What is matzah?

**Leader:** Matzah is unleavened bread, bread made without yeast. Yeast makes bread rise, but it takes time. Because the Israelites had to make hasty preparations to leave Egypt, they did not have time to wait for the bread to rise.

**All:** What is the meaning of “moror?”

**Leader:** Moror means bitter herbs. We eat these herbs to remind us that the lives of God’s people were made bitter by slavery in Egypt. *(The participants eat the bitter herbs.)*

**All:** What is the meaning of horoses?

**Leader:** Horoses is a mixture of apples, nuts and cinnamon. The horoses looks like the mortar which the people of Israel used to build the Pharaoh’s cities. *(Each participant breaks a piece of matzah, places horoses on it, and eats.)*

**All:** What is the meaning of pesach?

**Leader:** Pesach means paschal lamb, in memory of that night when God helped our forefathers in Egypt. The blood of the lamb was placed on the door and the angel of death passed over that house. That night the people passed over into the land of liberty and freedom.

**Leader:** Just as we shared wine from one bowl, we break one piece of bread and pass it to everyone, signifying unity. Long ago the householder gave a piece of bread to show love. This gives special meaning to the act of Christ in taking a piece of bread and handing it to Judas. That gesture was a last loving appeal to Judas. But as the Gospel tells us “he, having received the morsel, went out immediately.” *(Each participant takes a piece of matzah.)*

**All:** Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe, who has made us hold your commandment and has told us to eat this unleavened bread. *(Everyone eats the matzah.)*

### **Final Blessing**

**Leader:** It is the custom to end the Passover meal with this piece of unleavened bread. *(The leader breaks the matzah in the center of the table and passes it to all.)*

It was probably at this moment that Christ took bread, broke it and gave it to his friends saying, “take and eat, this is my body which is to be given for you.” *(All eat a piece of the matzah.)*

The cup of wine as passed. *(The leader pours grape juice into each cup.)*

After he had eaten, Christ took a cup and offered thanks and gave it to his friends and said, “This is my blood, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (*All drink the grape juice.*)

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord makes his face shine upon you and have mercy on you. The Lord give you peace.

So be it. Amen.

(*Sing Amen, Yeghitzi.*)

— Adapted from  
*The Best of Holy Days and Holidays*  
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